EDITORIAL.

Dr. Talmage on Baptism.

Dr. Talmage lately preached a sermon in the Brooklyn Tabernacle on the Syrian Leper. In describing Naaman's baptism in Jordan he uses the following language: "Naaman assisted by his attendants, gets down out of the chariot and painfully comes to the brink of the river, and steps in until the water comes to the ankle, and goes on deeper until the water comes to the girdle, and now standing so far down in the stream a little inclination of the head will thoroughly immerse him."

Dr. Talmage draws largely from the imagination in his delineation of characters and scenes of the Bible, but in the above description he has something more than his imagination to draw from. The face forward mode in baptism, is not only the most natural, but it is the only one described whenever any description is attempted in connection with the Jewish or Rabbinical mode of baptism. As Naaman baptized (dipped) *himself*, so also, it was customary among the Jews to have their proselytes to baptize themselves. To this Dr. Clark, bears testimony in his comments at the close of Mark's gospel, also Brown in his Bible Dictionary in his article on Proselyte, John's Bible Archeology, Lightfoot, and many others, in fact authority after authority might be quoted to sustain the assertion, which cannot be successfully controverted. These converts, baptizing themselves, did it in the most natural way, which was as described by Talmage in his description of the baptism of Naaman the Leper. Christ, in giving his commission to his disciples, to baptize all nations, uses the same term as was used by Flisha the prophet when he told Naaman to *baptize* seven times in Jordan. The Old Testament translators rendered the word *baptize*, dip, which Talmage and everybody else understands to be immerse, in Naaman's case, and it would therefore seem evident that the word should be similarly translated in the New Testament.

Luther, in his German translation, renders the word *baptizo* in II Kings *tauf*, and also uses *tauf* in his translation of the same word throughout the New Testament.

That Talmage does not practice what he preaches, and that Lutherans insist in understanding Luther's translation of *tauf* to mean sprinkling or pouring, does not invalidate their testimony in favor of our mode, but makes it all the stronger; as the strongest kind of evidence that can be brought into court is that kind in which the witnesses are forced, by circumstances, to testify to the truth, when it is quite contrary to their interests to do so.

Talmage does well, in this sermon, to place stress upon the fact that Naaman had to yield obedience to the Lord in order to be cured from his leprosy; but he should also explain why the Lord's command at this day may be set aside, and sprinkling or pouring be substituted for immersion. We shall agree with him that water baptism is of no importance unless connected with a holy life, but as long as he and other pedo-baptists administer the ordinance to infants, it is becoming in them to explain themselves on this subject with some regard for divine authenticity of the ceremony.

YODER.

Coals of Fire.

It is strange how radically people will differ in their interpretation of scripture. It seems that whoever will attempt an original interpretation of any passage concerning which there may be some difference of opinion, he will not be very apt to agree with any previous explanation. As an example of this difference of opinion let us take the oft-quoted text: "For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head."

A common explanation of this has been, that as the heaping of coals above metals at the forge would melt down the metal, for its refinement, and for its subsequent better use, so kindness to an enemy will tend to his melting and refining.

Again, it has been suggested that, as fire is commonly used in the Bible as a symbol of God's avenging, the thought of this proverb is, that our best treatment of one who has injured us, is patient and generous kindness, while our avenging against him may safely be left to God. In this sense there would seem a reason for Paul's quoting the proverb in conjunction with his admonition: "Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto wrath: for it is written; vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord. *Therefore*, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head."

Another meaning is suggested by Burder. He says that in the East, a common symbol of extreme distress, and of a desire for help, is fire on the head,—that is, above the head, as in a brazier,—and that when an audience with a ruler is desired, by one in peculiar need, this sign is made use of by the petitioner. In this sense, the proverb would seem to imply that if you treat your enemy with patient kindness, the time will come when he will turn to you in a sense of need, and of longing for your help.

Gesenius would see in this proverb an assurance that an enemy treated with kindness will come to have burning shame in his own mind as a result of that unmerited kindness.

In like manner the Arabs speak of "coals of the heart," "fire of the liver," to denote burning care, anxiety, remorse and shame. This in our mind is the more reasonable and natural explanation of the figure, because it is the simplest.

But there is one more explanation that we will notice. It is that the proverb signifies giving one a basket or bag of coals for a present, which would be a great favor, since coal was very rare. As burdens were generally carried on the head, this would be "heaping coals of fire (coals for making fire) upon his head." This explanation will not stand testing. As to the coals borne on the head as a gift, the term "coals of fire," or more literally, "burning-coals," or "live coals," could not apply to the unlighted charcoal, which is a common head-burden in the East.

Now if there is such a great difference of opinion concerning such a common text, what can we expect to find when important passages and doctrines become the subject of controversy?

M.

A Unity in Diversity.

Underneath all the seeming diversity of human needs and human occupations there is an underlying unity. One plows the ground and scatters the grain, another builds; a third weaves; a fourth descends into the earth to bring thence her mineral treasures. But still each of these is working only at a separate part of one great whole, and each serves and is served by the other. The needs of each are about the same. All must eat and drink, and be clothed, and have instruments to work with. The satisfying of each of these needs comes to him in the doing of his own little portion of the general work, not in his attempting to do all kinds of work for himself.

This is true in the economy of society, and it is true also in the economy of the church. It would not be very beneficial for the success of Christianity, if all Christians were doing the same kind of work. It is well that our talents and opportunities lay in different channels. We are not all gifted alike, one may be able to plow up, another can scatter seeds of kindness and love and good works while others will come and reap in the harvest. There is a corner of the Lord's vineyard for each one of us. Yet with all our diversities in opinion, and modes of working, we may be united in the great desire to glorify the Lord and win souls into his kingdom.

To illustrate our idea, we will use a remark made by Bro. Holsinger a few years ago. He was exhorting the church to more activity in the great cause. He said that the duty of the church was to spread the tidings of salvation. This was most generally done by preaching, but we could not all be preachers. Still we could all preach in some way. He explained that a sermon cost so much, say five dollars. Now by giving of our means to support the minister and his family, a man who has no talent himself may be able to preach there, four, five, or a dozen sermons a year. Others who have nothing to give in this way, could encourage the others, and aid them by a consistent life and words in season. So let us not say that we can do nothing. We can all do much. While we differ in circumstances and opinions, let us work for the one great end.

M.

Exegesis of the Sermon on the Mount.

Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted.

The class of mourners which the Master Teacher here refers to is not those who weep over sins for a moment and then have no more sorrow, but that class who have a continual feeling of gratefulness in their hearts for God and Christ that they did so much and exhibited so much love in the work of redemption.

In commencing the divine life, man is to have a godly sorrow that worketh repentance that need not be repented of; and after he has commenced his race in righteousness he should still mourn that he was so sinful that it was necessary that another, and even the Son of God, should die that he might live. Poverty in spirit and mourning are as twins in the Christian race. No one ever mourns without feeling humble; and no one is conscious of his own poverty without humiliation.

The true disciple of Christ will be a sharer in the sufferings of Christ; or in plainer language he will never forget what Christ endured in his behalf, and to remember distress, anguish or tribulation that others endured is to share in the suffering in some degree. The soul cleansed from sin will continually repeat:

Is it true that Christ for me
Wept in dark Gethsemane,
For my soul a burden felt,
While in midnight gloom he knelt?
Is it true, or, can it be,
That my Savior wept for me?

The redeemed soul responds, yes, it is true. Christ wept—and mourning begets mourning.

Then while in the body there is danger of falling short of the glory of God and the everlasting joys that await the worthy in the heavenly country. The Scriptures teach:

He by Pontius Pilate slain,
Yet shall come to earth again;
Come to rend the silent tomb,
Come to speak man's final doom,
Oh, in that tremendous day,
Lord, remember me, I pray.

The mourner in Christ will make special effort to merit his approval, and will then be obedient to his commandments; and this, according to the Scriptures, shall be the evidence that he loves his Redeemer.

The promise to the mourner in Christ is that he shall be comforted. When his struggle in this life is finished, he shall receive the crown of rejoicing, to abide upon him through all eternity.

How To Get Faith.

I hear a great many people say, "How am I to get faith? I would come to Christ; but I don't know how to get faith." It would take months and years to get that. Now, I was a long time getting faith. I was anxious to work for the Lord, but I wanted faith. I wanted to get faith, but I went about it the wrong way. I prayed for it, and did nothing else. That isn't the way to get faith—to pray for it and neglect the word of God. The way to get faith is to know who God is; and I never knew a man or woman that was well acquainted with God that wanted faith. Some one said to a Scotch woman, "You are a woman of great faith." "No," she says, "I am a woman of little faith, but I have a great God." Now, would you just turn a moment to the twentieth chapter of the gospel of John, and the thirty-first verse. "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through his name." Now the whole gospel of John was written for one purpose. John took up his pen, and he wrote that gospel that we might believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and that by believing we might have eternal life. And so, instead of praying for faith, and mourning because we haven't got faith, let us study the word of God and get acquainted with the God of Israel, and then we will have faith in him. You can't find a man or a woman that is acquainted with God, but that has strong faith in God.—*D. L. Moody.*